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III.—VOTING ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS FOR THE YEAR 1956-57—*cont.*

(1) DEMAND XXIII.—LABOUR INCLUDING FACTORIES—*cont.*

MR. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister for Industries and Labour will now reply to the debate. 9-40 a.m.

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, several hon. Members, as many as 14 hon. Members, if I am correct, participated in the discussion on the Labour Demand. I am glad to see the keen interest taken by hon. Members on this important question of labour. This question means good relationship between labour and management, avoidance of exploitation of labour and merging to promote questions relating to labour welfare.

The hon. Member who initiated the discussion and the hon. Member who wound up the discussion—Sri P. Jeevanandham and Sri K. P. Gopalan—made as usual very earnest appeals in the cause of labour. Sir, the hon. Member who initiated the discussion—Sri P. Jeevanandham—made a very passionate appeal and plea in the interests of labour. But he was also conscious that he was an hon. Member sitting in opposition to the Government and, therefore, he sought to make out that there was much variance between the policy pursued in the matter of labour by this Government and the policy enunciated in the matter of labour in the Five-Year Plan that has been drafted and that is to be implemented by this Government. I can at once tell him that so far as this Government are concerned they are quite aware of the important place of labour in an all-round improvement of society. I can say, Sir, that the Government have been endeavouring on the best way possible to do everything that should enable labour not only lead a happy and contented life but also to make its best contribution to the wealth of the country which would mean the raising of the standard of living of the people of this country. I can also tell hon. Members that the Government cannot achieve that object except with the unstinted co-operation of the people and particularly those who are interested in the welfare of labour.

The hon. Member who wound up the debate, Sri K. P. Gopalan, did express his sense of appreciation for some good work turned out by the Labour Department. But, at the same time, Sir, with all his earnestness and sincerity, he referred to some acts of commission on the part of Government. He is very enthusiastic and overenthusiastic and I do welcome his over-enthusiasm. But his overenthusiasm leads him to look to some act of omission or fault on the part of the Government. Although he did concede that the Government were doing something for labour, he referred to various instances to show that the Government were not quite firm in their attitude towards management and that sometimes they were acting slowly. I wish to refer to some of the specific cases that have been pointed out by the hon. Member Sri K. P. Gopalan. He referred to the closure of certain

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rubber estates in the months of February and March. I have been told that these rubber estates are usually closed during those months and the managements give due notice of closure to labour, and that is how some of the estates must have been closed. But, still, Sir, I am causing an enquiry to be made into the various instances referred to by the hon. Member as well as by other hon. Members and I shall see if there is any need for Government interference. I can assure the House that the Government would not hesitate to interfere and have matters settled.

Among other Members who participated in the discussion, some of them exhibited their sense of frustration and others exhibited a want of appreciation of the position. One hon. Member—and I was not surprised at it—maintained that labour was happier under the British regime than after the advent of freedom. I do not think, Sir, I should take it up seriously and contradict his statement. One other hon. Member pointed out that labour was all for management. I do not think I should take such extreme statements, accusations, and charges seriously and take the time of the House in replying to them. Another hon. Member pointed that the Works Committees were absolutely useless. I do not think that other hon. Members who are connected with labour movement would agree with that proposition.

Sir, hon. Member Sri P. Jeevanandham referred to certain tripartite recommendations with reference to beedi and engineering industries. I have often repeated in this House that these recommendations do not have any statutory force and that they cannot straightway be implemented. But, still, these tripartite committees are appointed to make enquiries so that the recommendations made by them can form the basis for any further enquiry and settlement.

Some hon. Members stated that the Government failed to refer cases of disputes to adjudication. I have explained in this House more than once that the Government have been entrusted with a sense of discretion in the matter of referring cases of dispute to adjudication and they have to discharge that responsibility. The Government do not believe in invariably referring all cases to adjudication. But the Government do try to effect a settlement and they have succeeded, as hon. Members are aware, in a number of cases in effecting a settlement and avoiding a prolonged enquiry by way of adjudication. Hon. Members are aware that with reference to certain large questions like bonus for one or two years claimed by workers in a large number of textile mills in Coimbatore, the Government have been able to effect settlement by way of arbitration and that settlement received universal satisfaction among the workers belonging to different unions. It was really good of the unions, in spite of a sense of rivalry existing among them, that they should have agreed to co-operate with the Government in effecting a settlement by way of arbitration. Last year, and year before last, the Government have been able to effect a settlement within two months on these large questions

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of bonus which should otherwise have been the subject matter of prolonged enquiry even for years. But, Sir, reference was made to the bonus question among the plantation workers. A special tribunal was appointed for settling this question of bonus and also for settling various other questions. Even last year, I was very much worried about the delays that were caused on account of this enquiry. Sir, once a case is referred to a tribunal, the Government cannot cut short the enquiry and Government cannot interfere in the matter. But still, Sir, with reference to the question relating to bonus for the subsequent year, namely 1954, that arose, an agreement was reached that they should await the result of the enquiry by the tribunal with reference to bonus for the previous years. Again there was a dispute with reference to bonus for 1955. Whenever the matter is brought to the notice of the Government, they take prompt steps to have the matter discussed and settled. A few days back there was a dispute with reference to certain estates in Valparai. The hon. Member Sri K. P. Gopalan is aware that there was recently a general discussion along with the representatives of the management and efforts are made to effect a settlement. During the last year, there have been as many as 311 awards given by the Industrial Tribunals in the matter of various references for adjudication. Therefore, the hon. Member should appreciate that the Government do not hesitate to refer cases for adjudication whenever they find it necessary, and, on an average, after enquiry by the Tribunal, an award is given every day in the year.

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a.m.

Then, Sir, with reference to the charge made by some hon. Members that the Government always side the management and that they do not take any action against the management for their faults, I would like to point out that even during the last year there were as many as eleven prosecutions against the management for failure to implement the decisions for failure to implement the awards of the Industrial Tribunals or for failure to give effect to the settlement reached. Whether it is the management or labour, Government would be equally firm.

On the other hand, I would like to point out that there have been so many lightning strikes and illegal strikes in Coimbatore alone in the various textile mills. Hon. Members are aware of the action that could be taken against illegal strikes, but still Government have been fairly lenient in the matter. When certain accredited representatives of labour themselves pointed out to me how this kind of frequent strikes resulting in violence and disturbance of peace affects the other workers, I suggested to the officers concerned that they might take serious notice of any illegal strike that might happen hereafter. Hon. Members are aware that strikes should be the last weapon of the workers but sometimes there are illegal strikes and sometimes there are strikes without justification. After a strike takes place, sometimes it is brought to the notice of the Government and Government intervene and I do remember cases where Government have been able to effect a

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settlement to the satisfaction of the parties. Therefore, before the strikes are resorted to, if the representatives of the workers would come to the Government, these strikes could have been avoided. But there must be a sense of appreciation of the position by the workers and the representatives of the workers. The rivalry between trade unions is the bane of sound trade unionism. That leads to blackmailing, mudslinging and all sorts of things against one another. Sometimes on account of the sense of rivalry between one union and another, they even plead against the cause of the workers themselves. I do remember a case where at the instance of the leader of a particular union affiliated to the Praja Socialist Party, I asked the Department to invite the representatives of both the management and the workers to come over here for a general discussion. There was a lock-out and those particular workers were worried that the management were going to take only certain workers and resume work. So they came to me running. It was the leader of the Praja Socialist Party. The hon. Member Sri K. T. Sridharan made a sweeping statement that this Government would take up only cases presented by the I.N.T.U.C. But this was what happened in that case. When I had asked the Department to invite the representatives of the management and workers to meet me and discuss with me, the leader of the I.N.T.U.C. came to me the next morning and asked me why I had invited the representatives of the workers and the representatives of the management. I told him that when there was some dispute I had to effect settlement and therefore I asked them to meet me. He said that the whole game was being spoiled by me. That was his accusation against me. He said that, if the Government did not interfere, the management would have succeeded in taking certain workers and locking out other workers and then the whole thing would be over. But I did not listen to the leader of the I.N.T.U.C. So there was a joint discussion and within an hour a settlement was reached which was satisfactory to the workers, whether they belonged to the I.N.T.U.C. or to the Praja Socialist Party. Again, in another case, where I tried to effect a settlement between the management and the workers, two unions were interested. When I found that the management—that was a non-Indian management—would not listen to my suggestion, the leader of the workers affiliated to the Communist Party and who belonged to the Trade Union Congress told me that I should not have referred the matter for adjudication. He felt that it was against the interest of his workers. But I would like to tell the hon. Members that I am not guided by the special pleas of this leader or that leader. I am only concerned with (1) the general interest of the workers and (2) the measures that should not hamper production but that should enable stepping up production in this country. I should take this occasion to deprecate very strongly this kind of go-slow tactics, illegal strikes and lightning strikes resorted to by the labourers. But I can also understand the position of the labour. They are sometimes not properly guided. They are sometimes deliberately misguided by

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public leaders who are not fully conversant as to what should be done to promote sound trade unionism, but they are interested in certain other things than trade unionism.

They are interested in their own affairs. They are interested in their own politics and thus labour is misguided.

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a.m.

Sir, a reference was made to the Nelson Type Foundry matter. That case was brought to my notice when the strike was on. I then found that the strike was not justified. The hon. Member who made a reference himself said that the workers asked for advance payments, the management did not pay and therefore there was a strike. Whether the demand for advance payment was justified or not, if the management would not agree, they could at once come to Government. They could have at once sought to raise it as a dispute. But, because an advance payment is not promptly agreed to, I do not think that would be ample justification for resorting to strike. Still, as the hon. Member who made that reference himself admitted, when the matter was brought to the notice of the Government, I have had again a joint discussion both with labour and management and a settlement was effected. I only point this out to show that in several of the cases Government have been able to effect settlement. The Government are ready to intervene whenever any trouble arises and is brought to their notice and Government have been interfering and using their good offices to the extent possible.

The hon. Member Sri Jeevanandam referred to the Neiveli Project workers. I have explained more than once in this House the position as the Government viewed. I could once again repeat that all the action that was taken by the Department concerned, now rests with the Government of India and all that this Government did was only in the interests of the successful implementation of that great Project to which the country is looking forward.

The hon. Member Sri S. C. C. Anthoni Pillai made a pointed reference to the affairs in the T.I. Cycle Factory and he made serious charges that Government were taking up certain attitude in the interests of the management or in support of the management. He even wondered whether I had any moral right to ask labour to do this or that. I shall leave alone that 'moral' aspect. I shall leave alone the question of statutory right. I did not ask and I do not propose to ask labour to do this or that except to appeal to them not to allow themselves to be misguided by interested leadership but do everything to promote production. In the T.I. Cycle Factory affair, this was what happened. The Government of India were interested in stepping up production of cycles. They were also interested in lowering the prices of cycles. I need not point out that cycle is a poor man's vehicle and non Members will perhaps appreciate that there may be several cycle users who do not get as much as the workers who produce these cycles. Yet, I did not mean to say that workers do get all that they should

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get. Of course, workers should get what they are entitled to get, what they need for a happy life and what they are entitled for the valuable contribution they make. There, the management proposed to introduce the piece-rate system in one section. In another section the piece-rate system was already in vogue. But, in 'A' section, as it was called, this piece rate system was proposed to be introduced. There was a detailed examination of time and motion study and then they had certain proposals to introduce that system. At that stage, it was taken to the notice of the Labour Commissioner and he was also present at the discussions. Then, this piece-rate system was introduced in one section, i.e., the hub section and that would affect only three workers out of about 600 workers. Only three workers were to be affected by the actual implementation of this system which was sought to be made by the management. And there was no idea of retrenchment. But these three workers started go-slow tactics. Instead of producing 100 cycles within a particular time, they turned out only three cycles and therefore they were evidently not working or were working very slow. Therefore, the management took action against these three workers. These three workers were suspended, and they had to go out of the premises. When these workers felt that the introduction of piece-rate system was wrong, immediately they could have referred the matter to the Government. They could have taken the matter to the Labour Commissioner as a dispute. That is a separate matter. But, instead of taking that legitimate step, all the other workers went out on strike. They were advised to resume; they were given notice. But they would not listen and they would not resume. It was at that stage the matter was brought to the notice of the Government. The Government, after examining the whole position, found that the workers were totally unjustified in resorting to this strike. Therefore, Government would not feel like intervening in the matter. But, they were advising the management to wait and see although the workers went on strike and although they did not turn up in spite of notices and although production was being hampered to that extent. The Management was waiting. It was at that stage the then leader of the Workers' Union, who belongs to the I.N.T.U.C. came to me and asked me to intervene and effect a settlement. So, the matter was discussed between the leader of the workers and the representatives of the management. But still the strike was continuing and the workers would not resume work. Then the management had called for applications when they had dismissed all the workers. But they were advised by the Government not to take in anybody from among the applicants and to wait for sometime more so that the workers could persuade themselves if they could not be persuaded by their leaders to resume work. The management still waited but the workers did not turn up. Then, they took about 70 persons from among the new applicants. After that, the leader of the I.N.T.U.C. again came to me and appealed to me to effect a settlement. He said that he would agree to whatever I could suggest.

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Then, I asked him and the management to have a discussion with the officers of the Government. Afterwards, they came to me and we had two hours' discussion and a settlement was reached. (Interruption.) The leader of the workers agreed to that. When communication went to the Union to confirm the terms of the settlement, they would confirm only one part of the settlement but not the other part. They decided to go back on the other part. Then, again, the leaders of I.N.T.U.C. came to me and wanted me to intervene. I told them that I had spent so much time already and there was a settlement and I thought that it would be implemented but, if the workers should go back upon it, it was no good my intervening further. Sir, it was at that stage that certain other leaders took up the cause of the workers and came to me. I explained to them the whole position and said that the workers were being injured by that kind of leadership and I finally expressed my hope that those leaders at least would stand by labour and advise them properly. Then, again, another set of leaders came to me and sought my intervention. I repeated the same thing to them. Afterwards, the hon. Member who spoke so vehemently the other day came to me. I can understand his sense of frustration which should have impelled him to make a bitter attack on the Government for their failure to end the strike. He saw the trouble in these waters and so he spread his net there but the fish must come. Although he is a very experienced and able leader of workers, he did want the support of the Government in order to achieve his own desire and thus expand his activities. But I repeated to him the same thing which I did to the other leaders. I explained to him the whole position and told him that so far I thought that it was wrong leadership but I could now see that the rank and file did not know their own good and sent leader after leader. Leaders after leaders came to me on behalf of the workers and I am only sorry, for I could not do anything in the matter. It was under such circumstances that the hon. Member, Sri Anthoni Pillai, levelled that charge against the Government in respect of this Cycle Factory strike. Sir, if the hon. Member wants to assume the leadership of these workers, he should find out ways and means of establishing his leadership and he should not simply look to the Government for help at this stage.

Sir, references were made to certain actions of the Police. In that connexion, mention was also made of certain orders issued under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code. Sir, the Police are also interested in maintaining law and order. I have since enquired into the matter and I can mention one instance of violence resorted to against poor workers. In that factory, there is a garden. As the gardener has also joined the strike, in order to keep the plants in the garden green, the management is reported to have sought the good offices of the Soundarya Nursery to lend a man who was attending to these poor plants. But that man was assaulted and this is one case of violence. When there is an act of violence, it is the duty and responsibility of the Police to take such action as they think fit in the interests of law and order.

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Sir, the hon. Member is a veteran leader of Labour Unions, but he would like to have the Labour treated as his own chattels. If he is in the Praja-Socialist Party, he wants the Labour also to be under the control of the Praja-Socialist Party. If he is in the Socialist Party, he also wants the Labour to be under the control of the Socialist Party. If he wanted to participate in the hartal on the 20th February he also wanted the Labour to join him. They have no freedom to act. If he desires to establish his own influence over Labour, he wants them to resort to strike.

The other hon. Member belonging to his Party, Mr. Pakkiraswami Pillai, made a pointed reference and contended that the one day strike of labour in the B. & C. Mills achieved something. I could not understand what was achieved and what was the purpose of that strike.

Sir, the hon. Member who is the leader of the Union wanted that a particular Judge from the High Court should be appointed as a Judge for the purpose of arbitration, to which the Government could never agree. Finally we simply asked the High Court to suggest a Judge to do arbitration and the High Court had very kindly agreed to it and suggested the name of a Judge who has taken up the case for arbitration.

SRI S. C. C. ANTHONI PILLAI: Will the Hon. Minister be kind enough to answer one specific question? Did the management of the T.I. Cycles inform the Government of the exact piece rate system they were introducing? Did they inform the workers of the altered conditions of wages before they introduced it? Further, will the Government state whether, in their opinion, such alteration of wages of the workers without prior notification is proper and legal?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I was just mentioning that all these questions could have been put by those three workers or on behalf of them by the Union when the piece rate system was sought to be introduced. At that time, it would apply only to three workers.

Sir, it is no good using the common appellations like 'black legs', 'victimization' etc. The Government as well as the Opposition understand the exact appellation of these words. The Government would never encourage black legs. The Government would not help victimization. But, at the same time, the Government cannot be expected to do exactly what the leaders of Labour would be required to be done whenever anything is sought to be done.

Sir, the hon. Member, Sri Anthoni Pillai made a reference to the working of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation with particular reference to the workers of the B. & C. Mills. He pointed out that even though they get certificates from the dispensary doctors, they are also required to take certificates from the

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company doctors. This question was raised on a previous occasion. But now the hon. Member wants that these workers may be exempted from the Employees' State Insurance Act. I do not think they would be justified in getting exemption from that Act, but still, these difficulties are being looked into and necessary action will be taken by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation to suggest remedies to these workers who suffer under these handicaps.

Reference was made to industrial housing. Some hon. members talked as if it was the sole responsibility of the Government to build houses to the workers. The Government of India have allotted funds and this Government are quite eager to avail themselves of the funds that are made available. But, Sir, Government should not take all the responsibility on their heads. Primarily, it is the responsibility of the managements and I have been putting to the managements that, if they are shrewd businessmen, they should accept that it is the most valuable investment they could have if they build convenient quarters for their own workers. Some managements have come forward to take advantage of this. About 15 concerns have so far built about 1,211 tenements. They have got loans to the extent of Rs. 11,35,975 and subsidy to the extent of Rs. 10,02,953. Government are also trying to have housing through co-operative societies. That would be for the benefit of the workers. Regarding the workers' contribution, I have been putting to the managements and some of them have agreed to advance the workers' shares as loans to the workers. In that way if co-operative societies are formed and houses built, the workers might ultimately own these houses. I would certainly prefer this scheme to other schemes. But at the same time Government also have taken up construction of houses. They are constructing about 936 single-storeyed houses in Sembiam and Erukkancheri. In 1955-56 they have been spending Rs. 7,91,000 and in 1956-57 Rs. 12,46,400 have been allotted for this purpose. I have been putting to the managements that if they could come forward to provide suitable sites free to the Government, then Government would undertake construction of houses taking advantage of the facility which we could have from the Government of India by way of 50 per cent loans and 50 per cent subsidy.

Regarding plantation workers, Government are quite well aware of the need to provide plantation workers with houses. Government have offered to the managements a loan of Rs. 2,000 per each tenement so that they could come forward to build houses. Under the rules that have been issued under the Plantation Labour Act, Government will take up the question of implementing the various responsibilities and duties that the managements have to discharge towards labour. Sir, the hon. Member from Coimbatore, Sri Kuppaswami, said that there was no provision for beds in Coimbatore under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme. I would like to tell him that Government have a proposal under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme

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for the construction an annexe of 40 beds to the District Headquarters Hospital, Coimbatore, and that will be taken up soon. In the meanwhile, provision has been made in the existing hospitals and also in the 'T.B. Sanatorium, Perundurai, so that these workers who come under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme may be treated properly.

Sir, the hon. Member Sri Palaniyandi referred to certain disputes relating to the tyre company. He only brought it to my notice a few days back and that matter is being looked into. Whatever matters are brought to the notice of the Government in this way, we do not fail to take such action as could be taken under the circumstances promptly.

The hon. Member Sri Pakkiriswami Pillai questioned not only the correctness but the *bona fides* of the statistics prepared by the departments of Government. I am amazed at that statement. He comes to that conclusion because the cost of living index goes down. He can see no other reason except there were some *mala fides* on the part of compilers of statistics.

The hon. Member Sri K. T. Raju referred to Government undertakings. I would tell him that the Government are equally anxious that the workers under the Government undertakings should not be treated in a different way and should not be permitted to suffer any handicaps. I can tell this much to the House that Government would not do anything by way of exploiting their labour. But, Sir, there must be a sense of appreciation about the difference between Government undertakings and undertakings run by managements as capitalistic concerns.

I was indeed very happy to hear the hon. Member Sri Gopalan when he drew the attention of the Government to the need for promoting cultural activities of labour. Workers and their leaders are easily excited about fighting for this or that. But there is the constructive side which is at least equally important. Whatever the workers earn, not only by their sweat and labour, but also by the prolonged struggle, Government are anxious that they should be able to use them fully for the permanent rehabilitation of their families. Sir, in plantations some welfare work has been started. Thanks to the aid that is available from the Central Tea Board. But I am not satisfied that there has been adequate progress. That is because neither the workers nor the managements, in spite of my persuasions, have been able to take sufficient interest in the promotion of welfare work. I do hope, Sir, we shall get better co-operation. I was happy to see when I went round the Ahmedabad Workers' Union that one-third of the subscriptions they are collecting, i.e., Rs. 2 lakhs out of Rs. 6 lakhs they collect every year, is devoted for welfare work, apart from what Government do by way of welfare activities, and cultural activities for their children and women. Apart from what Government have been doing, a big Workers' Union which has a lakh of membership collects an annual subscription of about Rs. 6 lakhs and sets apart one-third of it, viz., Rs. 2 lakhs for their

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own welfare activities. May I not commend this aspect of the Union's welfare work to the Unions that are functioning in this State? Government are quite anxious that they should be able to do something tangible in the coming year. With that idea, they propose to start two centres in Madras City, two centres in Coimbatore and one centre in Madurai for carrying out welfare work.

The hon. Members Sri Gopalan referred to certain affairs of the Pappinisseri Textile Mill that was opened again. Even about that decision I have explained that Government could not under the existing law, insist on the new management taking all the old workers. But still, Sir, the management have taken most of the workers and the workers have been able to find work. The mill is slowly expanding and when it expands further, I have no doubt that it will be able to employ more workers.

With reference to legislation regarding labour, the following proposals are under the examination of the Government and we do hope that, in the course of the coming year, we shall be able to undertake legislation on those matters :—

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a.m.

A separate legislation to regulate the conditions of workers in hotels, restaurants, boarding houses, etc.

Amendment of the Maternity Benefit Act with a view to liberalize its provisions.

Re-enactment of the Madras Shops and Establishments Act in the light of experience gained and on the lines of the model draft Bill sent by the Government of India.

Legislation for compulsory recognition of a single trade union for each industry with a view to avoid rivalry among trade unions. This subject was discussed in the Labour Standing Committee meeting. Some of the hon. Members of the Opposition were present and I am glad that there was unanimous agreement on the need for recognizing one trade union for each industry.

After the Special Officer appointed to enquire into the beedi industry submits his report, the question of enacting legislation to regulate the conditions of work in that industry will also be taken up.

I would now appeal to labour and to leaders to play their worthy part in this great programme of amelioration which we have taken up. I would particularly appeal to labour to see to their own good and not to allow themselves to be misguided by unscrupulous leadership, to choose proper leaders and fight for their legitimate rights. I can assure them Government will do everything that should be done to help labour to achieve their objectives of leading a happy life and increasing the wealth of the country.

SRI S. C. C. ANTHONY PILLAI: The Hon. Minister appealed to the workers to choose proper leaders. I am very glad he should give that advice. But during the course of the speech,

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he vehemently criticized the leaders of the All-India Trade Union Congress, Indian National Trade Union Congress and Hind Mazdoor Sangh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. If it is a matter of personal explanation, I can allow. I am sorry I cannot allow any Member to make comments on the speech of the Hon. Minister.

SRI S. C. C. ANTHONY PILLAI: He has used the words 'unscrupulous leaders' very frequently.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I said 'unscrupulous leadership'.

SRI S. C. C. ANTHONY PILLAI: The distinction that is sought to be made is a very fine distinction. He vehemently criticized the All-India Trade Union Congress, Indian National Trade Union Congress and the Hind Mazdoor Sangh. May I know which other organization he expects to produce good leadership? Is it the Tamil Nad Congress Committee?

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I do not have partiality for any particular affiliation. It is my hope that all these trade unions will adjust themselves and offer to the poor labour very effective and correct leadership.

* SRI N. K. PALANISWAMI: கனம் சபாநாயகர் அவர்களே, சமீபத்தில் மின்சார வெட்டு ஏற்படப்போவதாக சர்க்கார் அறிக்கையிலிருந்து தெரிகிறது. இப்பொழுது மின்சார வெட்டு ஏற்பட்டால் தொழிலாளர்கள் பாதிக்கப்படுவார்கள் என்பது மட்டுமல்ல உற்பத்திக்கும் தடங்கல் ஏற்படும். சமீபத்தில் மில் முதலாளி சங்கத் தலைவர் அறிக்கை பிரகாரம் கோயமுத்தூர் டவுனில் மட்டும் உள்ள 60 மில்களில் 90 சத விகிதத்திற்குமேல் போதுமான ஆயில் இன்ஜின்கள் இருக்கின்றன. கோயமுத்தூரின் சுற்று வட்டாரத்தில் இருக்கக்கூடிய மில்களில் 50 சத விகிதத்திற்குமேல் ஆயில் இன்ஜின்கள் இருக்கின்றன. உற்பத்தி தடைபடாமல் இருப்பதற்கும் தொழிலாளிகள் பாதிக்கப்படாமலிருப்பதற்கும் மில் மானேஜ்மெனடுகளுக்கு உபநடியாக ஆயில் இன்ஜின்கள் வாங்கிக் கொடுப்பதற்கு சர்க்கார் ஏற்பாடு செய்வார்களா?

கனம் அமைச்சரவர்கள் சொல்லும்போது, "தொழிலாளிகள்தான் திடீரென்று வேலை நிறுத்தம் செய்கின்றார்கள், அதுவும் 'இல்லீகல் ஸ்ட்ரைக்' செய்கின்றார்கள்" என்று குறிப்பிட்டார்கள். சமீபத்தில் நடந்த சம்பவம் ஒன்றை அமைச்சரவர்களின் ஞாபகத்திற்குக் கொண்டுவருகின்றேன். இருபதுநாட்களுக்கு முன்பு கோயம்புத்தூர் ராஜலக்ஷ்மி மில்லில் இரண்டாயிரம் பேர்கள் மூன்று நாட்கள் வேலை நிறுத்தம் செய்தார்கள். பக்கத்தில் இருக்கக்கூடிய எணியை ஆயிலர் செக்ஷனில் இருக்கும் தொழிலாளி எடுக்கிறதா, லூம் செக்ஷனில் வேலை செய்யக்கூடிய தொழிலாளி எடுக்கிறதா என்ற பிரச்சனை ஏற்பட்டது. அதன்பேரில் லேபர் இன்ஸ்பெக்டர் வந்தார். எல்லோரும் வந்தும், யார் அதை எடுப்பது என்பதைப் பற்றி சட்டத்தில் "பிரொவிஷன்" ஒன்றும் இல்லாததால், யாரும் ஒன்றும் செய்ய முடியவில்லை. மூன்று நாட்கள் வேலை நிறுத்தம் நடந்தது. பத்து ஆயிரம் 15 ஆயிரம் ரூபாய்க்குமேல் நஷ்டம் ஏற்பட்டது. சட்டத்தில் சரியான "பிரொவிஷன்" வைக்காததால்தான் "இல்லீகல் ஸ்ட்ரைக்" நடப்பதற்கு காரணமாக இருக்கிறது என்று தெரிவித்துக்கொள்கின்றேன்.

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* **THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :** குறிப்பிட்ட வேலை நிறுத்தத்திற்கு யார் பொறுப்பு என்பதைப் பார்த்துத்தான் சொல்ல முடியும். மின்சார வெட்டு சம்பந்தமாக கனம் அங்கத்தினர் குறிப்பிட்டார். மின்சார வெட்டு வரக்கூடாது, உற்பத்தி பாதிக்கக்கூடாது என்பதுதான் சர்க்காருடைய ஆவல். ஆகவே, டெக்ஸ்டைல் மில்களிலே எந்தெந்த உதவி செய்து உற்பத்திக் குறைவைத் தடுத்தது, உற்பத்தியை அதிகரிக்கச் செய்யமுடியுமோ அதை அரசாங்கம் கவனித்துக்கொண்டு வருகிறார்கள்.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : I did not want to interrupt the Minister when he was speaking. I would like to ask for some clarification on certain points.

SRI V. C. PALANISAMI GOUNDER : On a point of information, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : Let that point of information be raised after Mr. Ramamurthi's point.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : The Hon. Minister said that Rs. 2,000 would be given per house for the housing schemes for plantation employees. May I point out to him that the intention of the Plantations Act is entirely different? In view of the enormous profits that the plantations have been making, this responsibility of construction of houses has been put upon the plantation owners, and they have got to discharge their responsibility irrespective of any assistance. This question was discussed in the various Plantation Committee meetings. At the Tripartite Conference held in Ootacamund about two years ago, this question was thrashed out. The Central Act provides that the plantation owners must find their own money. Will the Government see that this Rs. 2,000 per house is utilized for building houses elsewhere and force the managements of plantations to build houses?

* **THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :** Though I referred to the proposal to grant loans to these plantations, I added that the rules under the Plantations Act would be enforced. I had in my mind the point that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned when I made that addition. Under the rules we are required to compel the managements of plantations to attend to this charge on them. Still there may be smaller plantations which could not afford to build houses for want of funds. Under the Industrial Housing Scheme, there is an element of subsidy. But here there is no question of subsidy at all. It is a question of giving loan and loan implies not only the return of capital but also paying interest on the capital. In order to see that small plantations do not suffer by the provision of houses for their workers, the Government have this proposal.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : The Hon. Minister spoke about Neiveli. We also are equally interested in it. Will the Hon. Minister give an assurance that the 300 workers who had been retrenched will be taken back when the work starts? Now that the work has started, will he see that they are taken back?

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* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Whatever I say by way of assurance, I am expected to implement. There is a Committee on Government Assurances. Therefore, I would say that the Government of India are in charge of this work.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : The Hon. Minister said that the Government had got absolute discretion in referring disputes for adjudication. But the Government may decide arbitrarily. There is a High Court decision which says that the Government are bound to give the reasons for non-reference of disputes for adjudication. Will the Government, instead of taking umbrage under this general provision, justify their refusal to refer disputes for adjudication?

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I did not use the word 'absolute' at all. I only said that the Government had to discharge the responsibility which was put on them by the Statute. So Government do sometimes refuse to refer disputes for adjudication. Whenever questions are put in the Assembly, I do explain why the Government have refused adjudication.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : Lastly, I wish the Hon. Minister, who was so very solicitous to say that labour has got a great role to play, had said something about the role which labour had played. Will he acknowledge the fact that labour has contributed a great deal and that productivity has increased by 46 per cent?

10.40
a.m.

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I am very grateful to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for reminding me. I had intended to mention this. But some hon. Member said that there was no industrial peace at all. I had intended to point out that there was absolute industrial peace in spite of attempts of certain leaders to disturb it. There is industrial peace, and I must acknowledge with a sense of appreciation and gratitude the great part played by labour resulting in the stepping up of production as has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition.

SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER : Sir, the hon. Member Sri Palaniswami Gounder raised the question of power-cut. If effect is given to the power-cut, agricultural production will be affected. I should like to know whether the proposed power-cut is universal and will affect the agricultural labour.

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I do not think, Sir, this will affect the agricultural labour. If the hon. Member is also interested in labour, I would like to point out to him that particularly in Coimbatore, several of these mills have got their own generating sets, and this 25 per cent cut will not affect them. If the position in Pykara does not deteriorate further, there may not be any need to add to the cut and labour may not be affected.

MR. SPEAKER : I am going to put the cut motion to the vote of the House unless the hon. Member withdraws it.

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SRI K. P. GOPALAN : I am not withdrawing my cut motion, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is—

“ That the allotment of Rs. 32,50,600 under ‘ Demand XXIII—Labour including Factories ’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The cut motion was put and lost.

MR. SPEAKER : I now put the original Demand to the vote of the House. The question is—

“ That the Government be granted a sum not exceeding Rs. 32,50,600 under ‘ Demand XXIII—Labour including Factories ’.”

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

(2) DEMAND XVI—MEDICAL.

(3) DEMAND XVII—PUBLIC HEALTH.

(4) DEMAND XXXVII—CAPITAL OUTLAY ON PUBLIC HEALTH.

MR. SPEAKER : We now proceed to the Demands Nos. XVI, XVII and XXXVII. The Leader of the Opposition will now speak.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am departing from my usual practice of speaking in Tamil so that the Hon. Minister may not say later that he has not understood what I said. Just now we heard the reply of the Hon. the Minister for Labour who had stated that labour was his first charge, and that the Government were very much solicitous towards labour. I wish that as far as the Medical department is concerned the Government implemented that ardent desire of theirs.

I would take this Medical department under two or three heads. I would first take the condition meted out to the workers in the various hospitals. We are told that medical facilities in our State and generally in our country are very weak and that there is very great scope for expansion. We are told that hospitals are going to be expanded and all types of medical facilities are going to become plenty. We are being fed upon plenty of promises. What about the position of the workers in the hospitals? If we look at the budget provision, we will find that there are 6,000 workers of the lower subordinate staff in the districts as well as in the City. Three thousand of these people are employed on what is called ‘ Contingent expenditure ’. There are people who have put in 20 years’ service. There is one hospital—the Veterinary hospital—in Madras which does not contain on its roll a single worker on a permanent basis. All the workers are on ‘ Contingent expenditure ’. (Interruption by the Hon. Sri C. Subramaniam.) What applies to this hospital workers applies to other hospital workers also. As far as the entire State is concerned, there are three thousand workers on ‘ Contingent expenditure ’, and I do not know